



American Heart Association

**Children's Committee
Public Hearing – February 18, 2020
SB 88 AAC Children's Menus
Jim Williams, Government Relations Director
American Heart Association**

I would like to thank the leadership and members of the Children's Committee for providing me with the opportunity to comment in favor of SB 88 AAC Children's Meals.

The American Heart Association (AHA) has grown into the nation's oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. Our mission is to be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. The AHA supports this proposed bill because we strongly believe that it will ultimately help to build healthier lives for Connecticut children.

In an attempt at compromise specifically addressing the CT dairy industry objections over excluding flavored milk from the healthy default menu, we are ok with including flavored milk, the servings for which should be no more than 130 calories, or 8 oz. By highlighting healthy beverages, including milk, their sales are very likely to increase. With this proposed compromise, the CT dairy industry should strongly consider supporting the bill, as did Tammy Anderson-Wise, CEO of the Dairy Council of CA, for their state bill which went into effect January 1, 2019. Please see two attached pictures of flavored milk, both of which are under 130 calories, and currently in CT schools and at local McDonald's.

Our lives are busy, and more and more, we're grabbing a meal on the run or eating out. That's why it's so important that restaurants offer healthy beverage options- especially for children. This bill makes it easier for CT parents to help their kids to grow up at a healthy weight. When passed, it will make healthy beverages (water, sparkling water, flavored water with no added sweeteners, unflavored milk or a nondairy milk alternative) the default choice on children's restaurant menus.

This bill also preserves parent choice. **It is important to note that when this bill passes, parents remain free to choose and purchase beverages that are not included in the offering of healthy choices on the children's menu** such as sugary drinks like sports drinks, fruit drinks, energy drinks, soda or flavored milk.

Why is this bill important? According to the CT DPH, 32% of CT children (2-17 years old) are not at a healthy weight.¹ This bill specifically addresses the largest source of daily calories in the diets of American children- sugary drinks. Sugary drinks provide nearly half of children's added sugars intake and do not typically provide any positive nutritional value. Despite their calorie

count, they are not filling.² Each extra serving of a sugary drink consumed a day increases a child's chance of becoming obese by 60%.

The American Heart Association recommends no more than 6 teaspoons of added sugar a day for children over the age of two ². People living in the U.S. consume an average of 10 teaspoons of added sugar just from sugary drinks alone every day. While the AHA recommends no more than one 8-oz. serving of sugary drinks a week for children, nearly two-thirds of our country's kids consume at least one sugary drink every day. That's about ten times the recommended amount.³ On average, Americans consume 42.7 grams of sugar through beverages daily. This corresponds to approximately 34 pounds of added sugar annually.⁴

Despite the health risks associated with soda and other sugary drink consumption, the majority (74%) of the top restaurant chains' default beverage with a kid's meal is a sugary drink. ⁵ Defaults are the option people automatically receive if they do not choose something else. Changing the default from unhealthy options to healthier ones is an effective way to improve the nutritional quality of children's meals. **Evidence from a wide range of fields (including retirement plans, organ donation, and food/nutrition) shows that people tend to stick with defaults and that setting beneficial defaults has high rates of acceptability.**⁶ **When Walt Disney theme parks switched to healthier beverage defaults, parents stuck with the healthier option 66% of the time,** even though trips to theme parks are typically special occasions and more indulgent options were available.⁷ At McDonald's, the change of the default beverage resulted in 21M more low-fat and fat-free milk jugs and 100% apple juice boxes sold over a period of 11 months compared to the same period a year earlier.⁸ **Milk sales increased!**

This legislation is important because it helps to reduce one of the biggest culprits in the obesity epidemic and change the current norms that sugary drinks should be offered up first to our kids. We know that children who drink sugary drinks have greater odds of being at an unhealthy weight than those who consume little or no sugary drinks.⁹ This bill simply makes it easier for CT parents to make a healthier choice for their kids. We believe it is deserving of your support.

Sincerely,

Jim Williams
State Director of Government Relations
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¹CT Childhood Obesity Report, 2018. Estimates of Obesity and Its Risk Factors among CT Youth. Accessed at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Departments-and-Agencies/DPH/dph/hems/nutrition/PDF/Childhood-Obesity-Report-2018-final.pdf?la=en> on 2/4/2019.

²Johnson, RK, et al. Dietary sugars intake and cardiovascular health, a scientific statement from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 2009.120(11), 1011-1020.

³Rosinger, A. et al. Sugar Sweetened Beverage Consumption Among U.S. Youth, 2011-2014. NCHS Data Brief. No 271, January 2017.

⁴Miller PE, McKinnon RA, Krebs-Smith SM, et al. Sugar sweetened beverage consumption in the U.S.: Novel assessment methodology. *Am J Prev Med*. 2013; 45(4):416-421.

⁵Ribakove S, Almy J, Wootan MG. *Soda on the Menu: Improvements Seen but More Change Needed for Beverages on Restaurant Children's Menus*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Science in the Public Interest, July 2017.

⁶Wootan M. "Children's Meals in Restaurants: Families Need More Help to Make Healthy Choices." *Childhood Obesity* February 2012, vol. 8(1), pp. 31-33.

⁷Peters J, Beck J, Lande J, Pan Z, Cardel M, Ayoob K, Hill J. "Using Healthy Defaults in Walt Disney World Restaurants to Improve Nutrition." *The Behavioral Science of Eating* 2016, vol. 1, pp. 92-103.

⁸Center For Science in the Public Interest. Restaurant Children's Meals: The Faults With Unhealthy Defaults. Accessed at https://www.foodmarketing.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/fact_sheet_defaults_2018_final.pdf on 2/14/2020.

⁹Morenga LT, Mallard S, and Mann J. Dietary Sugars and Body Weight: Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses of Randomised Controlled Trials and Cohort Studies. *BMJ* 2013. Available at <http://www.bmj.com/content/bmj/346/bmj.e7492.full.pdf>.



AN EXCELLENT
SOURCE OF
CALCIUM



Nutrition Facts

Serv. Size 1 Bottle
(236mL)

Calories 130
Fat Cal. 0

Amount/Serving	%DV*	
Total Fat 0g	0%	Total Fat
Sat. Fat 0g	0%	Sat. Fat
Trans Fat 0g		Trans Fat
Cholesterol 5mg	2%	Cholesterol
Sodium 135mg	6%	Sodium
Vitamin A 10%		Vitamin A
Iron 8%		Iron
Vitamin B12 15%		Vitamin B12

*Percent Daily Values (DV) are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

INGREDIENTS: NONFAT MILK, LIQUID SUCROSE (SUGAR), COCOA (PROCESSED WITH ALKALI), NATURAL FLAVOR, VITAMIN A PALMITATE, VITAMIN D3.

CONTAINS: MILK

Distributed by McDonald's USA, LLC, Oak Brook, IL 60161
McDonald's® Milk Jug

Use through date & MFG Plant stamped on container
Homogenized • Perishable Keep Refrigerated • Store Upright
Container • Bottled in USA • Please remove label after use

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PUSH UP
HERE

PUSH UP
HERE

Nutrition Facts

1 serving per container

Serving size 1 carton (236mL)

Amount per serving

Calories

120

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 0g 0%

Saturated Fat 0g 0%

Trans Fat 0g

Cholesterol 5mg 2%

Sodium 200mg 9%

Total Carbohydrate 22g 8%

Dietary Fiber 0g 0%

Total Sugars 20g

Includes 9g Added Sugars 18%

Protein 8g

Vit. D 3mcg 15% • Calcium 294mg 25%

Iron 1mg 6% • Potas. 429mg 10%

*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.



American Heart Association

The CT Dairy Industry Should Support SB88 AAC Children's Menu's. It Is Likely to Lead to Increased Milk Sales AND a Public Health Win!



Tammy Anderson-Wise is the CEO of the Dairy Council of California, Sacramento, Calif.

California legislation making milk, water 'default' beverages at restaurants

That is good news for the dairy community and public health.

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New California legislation makes consuming healthy drink options easier for kids and families while eating on the go. The Healthy-By-Default Kids' Meal Drinks bill (SB 1192), which was signed into California law in September 2018, makes healthy beverages — water, sparkling water, flavored water with no added sweeteners and milk—the default beverages for children's meals at restaurants.

While families can still ask for beverages such as soft drinks, lemonade and fruit-flavored juices, the law nudges children and families to make healthy choices, which is **good news for the dairy community and public health**. The law will go into effect in January 2019 and comes at an important time when diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular disease remain critical public health concerns.

"At Dairy Council of California, we proactively educate our partners, both in the dairy community and in public health, on current research regarding the health benefits of milk and dairy foods. While we value our unique role, all dairy producers and processors can play a role in elevating the health of children and families by supporting initiatives that make the healthy choice the easy choice."

This article was accessed at <https://www.dairyfoods.com/blogs/14-dairy-foods-blog/post/93275-california-legislation-making-milk-water-default-beverages-at-restaurants> on 2/13/20. For more information contact American Heart Association Director of Government Relations Jim Williams at james.williams@heart.org